



FAKE NEWS; A DETRIMENTAL MATTER OF GLOBAL CONCERN

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IBADAN, NIGERIA -

The Bishops of the Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) have expressed concern over the negative effects of “fake news” on all facets of life in the country, noting that “such news has already brought down families, associations, governments, even other institutions all over the world, and even destroyed many innocent lives, ...” They therefore advocated the authentication of all information before believing and disseminating them.

The Bishops made this observation in the Communiqué issued at the end of their first Provincial Plenary Meeting held recently at the Jubilee Centre, Ibadan, Oyo State. Titled: Whither Nigeria, the communiqué was signed by Archbishop Gabriel ‘Leke Abegunrin of Ibadan and Bishop John Oyejola of Osogbo; President and Secretary of the Provincial Conference, respectively.

The Bishops declared: “Like elsewhere in the world, “fake news” has become a real concern in Nigeria. Due to the

democratization of information and the instruments of media, all have almost unlimited access to the means and methods of dissemination. This has turned everyone, to informers of almost equal status, regardless of their intention and objective.”

They continued: “As a result, fake news adversely affects practically all facets of modern society, government and Church inclusive. Given that such news has already brought down families, associations, governments, even other institutions all over the world, and even destroyed many innocent lives, every citizen has the responsibility to double-check the authenticity of information before believing or disseminating it.

The Bishops further stated that: “The matter becomes more worrying however when credible institutions of society deploy fake news to achieve ends considered profitable to them.” They therefore cautioned the country’s politicians, institutions, associations and people to be vigilant and minimize the adverse effects of fake news in the country; adding: “The end never justifies the means and anything built on falsehood eventually collapses. Only the truth can set us free”. They called on all stakeholders institutions and the entire people of the country to effectively disseminate necessary information that can build up the society and not destroy it.

Speaking on the recent release of the three Rev. Sisters and three Postulants, the Bishops expressed gratitude to God and appreciation to all those who have prayed or contributed in one way or the other to facilitate the release of these Sisters of the Congregation of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus (EHJ); after being in captivity for 55 days in kidnappers den. They urged the Sisters of the Congregation “to remain steadfast and focused in their holy vocation

of love and service to God and humanity”.

Other issues addressed in the communiqué by the Bishops included: pastoral and liturgical matters; piracy and interpolation of Religious texts, pro-Life and pro-Family Catechesis and signs of persecution of Christians and issues of Religious freedom.

Also present at the Provincial Ecclesiastical Conference meeting were: Bishops AyoMaria Atoyebi of Ilorin; Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo; Felix Ajakaiye of Ekiti and Jude Arogundade of Ondo.